UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council extends UNMIH mandate to no later than February 1996; looks forward to assumption of office by new, constitutionally elected Haitian government.

* Special Representative Akashi confers with Croatian Government and Croatian Serbs in attempt to reduce tension in western Bosnia and Herzegovina and prevent fighting in Croatia.

* Security Council says conditions do not exist for modification of sanctions regime against Libya.

* ECOWAS Heads of State call on United Nations to maintain presence in Liberia.

* Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance begin two-week meeting at Headquarters.

* Working Group on Indigenous Populations concludes thirteenth session in Geneva.

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The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) until a date not later than February 1996. The Council said it looked forward to the conclusion of the Mission's mandate at that time and to the safe, secure and orderly assumption of office by a new, constitutionally elected government. It stressed the importance of free and fair municipal, legislative and presidential elections as crucial steps in the complete consolidation of democracy in Haiti. It took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 1007 (1995).

(more)

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The Council commended UNMIH for its successful efforts to assist the Haitian Government in sustaining a secure and stable environment; protecting international personnel and key installations; establishing the conditions for holding elections; and professionalising the security forces. It commended the Haitian people for their peaceful participation in the first round of elections and called on the Government and political parties to ensure that forthcoming elections were conducted in an orderly, peaceful, free and fair manner. It expressed deep concern with irregularities in the recent elections and urged all parties to ensure that such problems were corrected in future balloting.

The Council stressed the importance of the international community's commitment to assist and support the economic, social and institutional development of Haiti. It called on States and international institutions to continue to provide assistance to the Government and people of Haiti as they consolidated the gains made towards democracy and stability.

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Special Representative Yasushi Akashi has been pursuing intensive efforts to reduce tension in western Bosnia and Herzegovina and prevent renewed fighting in Croatia, according to a United Nations spokesman. To that end, he conferred urgently with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman on Saturday and with Croatian Serb leader Milan Martic on Sunday.

Mr. Akashi emerged from the meeting in Knin with a six-point agreement under which the Croatian Serbs would disengage from fighting in, or shelling of, Bosnia's Bihac pocket and allow humanitarian deliveries there. However, President Tudjman rejected the agreement, reportedly saying the conditions for the Croatian Serb withdrawal were unacceptable. Mr. Akashi wrote to the President today, explaining his understanding of the agreement in greater detail and hoping for a more positive response.

Meanwhile, mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg had meetings with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade on Saturday and with senior Croatian officials in Zagreb yesterday. He hoped the Croatian Government and the Croatian Serbs would still meet in Geneva in early August, as previously agreed.

The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) reported that the Bihac pocket was quiet today as some Croatian Serb elements were withdrawing after heavy fighting yesterday. It estimated that there were more than 10,000 Croatian and Bosnian Croat troops in western Bosnia, and said that they had shelled Croatian Serb villages over the border.

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The Security Council has decided not to modify the sanctions regime imposed against Libya by resolution 748 (1992). The Council held its 120-day

review of those sanctions on Friday, and concluded that there was no agreement that the necessary conditions existed for modifying them.

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The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has called on the United Nations to maintain its presence in Liberia, according to Special Representative Anthony Nyakyi. That call was made by ECOWAS Heads of State at the conclusion of their Summit in Accra, Ghana, on Saturday.

The Liberian parties held talks in Monrovia prior to the ECOWAS Summit in an effort to resolve outstanding issues in the stalled peace process, but made no substantive progress. The talks were scheduled to have resumed today, but were deferred to a later date.

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The Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance today began a two-week meeting at Headquarters to lay the groundwork for the 1996 resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on making governments work better. Among the issues being considered are policy development, administrative restructuring, civil service reform, the role of public administration in social development, and financial management. In addition, case studies on South Africa's human resource development and Malaysia's efforts to improve public sector efficiency are being presented.

The Group comprises more than 50 experts from financial institutions and governmental and non-governmental organizations. Their recommendations will be reviewed at a resumed session of the Economic and Social Council later this year, and will serve as the basis of a report by the Secretary-General.

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The Working Group on Indigenous Populations has concluded its thirteenth session in Geneva. Several participants stressed the need for a clear definition of the term "indigenous people". The representative of Bangladesh stated that such a definition would enable the Working Group to identify the world's true indigenous people and seriously address their marginalization. He warned that a procedure based on self-identification could be self-defeating, as people of dubious credentials might take advantage of it.

The representative of Brazil said he was not sure if a definition was necessary. Discussion on the issue should be held next year, after the meeting of the new working group of the Commission on Human Rights which would be responsible for further elaborating the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people.

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